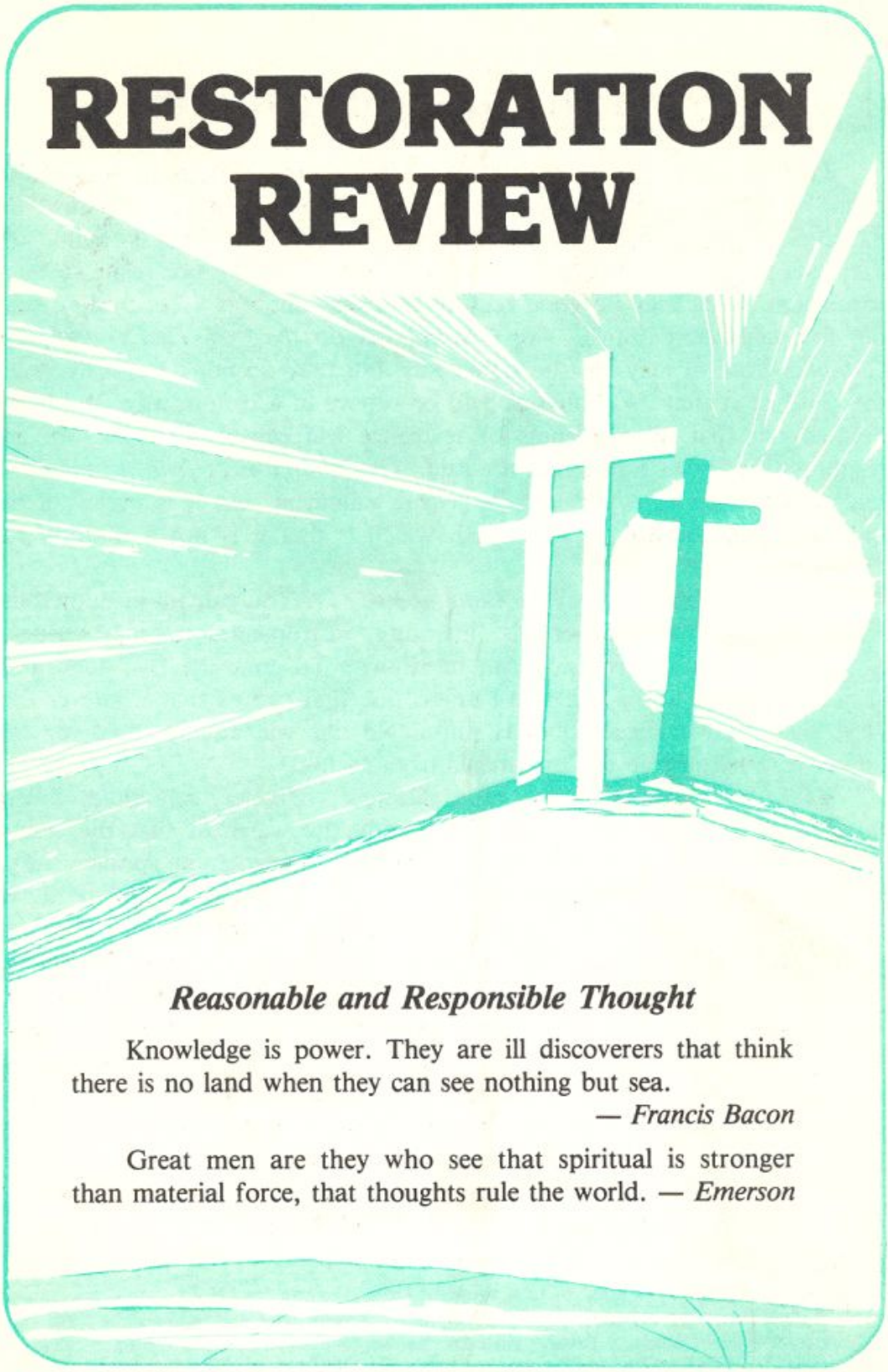
RESTORATION REVIEW



Reasonable and Responsible Thought

Knowledge is power. They are ill discoverers that think there is no land when they can see nothing but sea.

— *Francis Bacon*

Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than material force, that thoughts rule the world. — *Emerson*

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With All the Mind . . .

FALLACIES OF AMBIGUITY

Last time around we indicated that some logicians place all fallacies within two general categories, fallacies of irrelevance, which we studied in the previous installment, and fallacies of ambiguity. One is guilty of irrelevance when the reasons he gives for a conclusion do not relate to that conclusion. They may be *good* reasons and may support a conclusion, but not the conclusion drawn. *The Communists do that!* or *That's what the Catholics believe!* may be true statements, but they do not necessarily yield the conclusion that we should not do or believe in a certain way. We have pointed out that an awareness of relevance will cause us to ask *So?* in response to a lot of things that are said. *That church isn't fellowshipped by any congregation in town!* may be a true statement, but it is irrelevant to the conclusion implied, if not stated, which is that it is not a faithful (to God) church.

The New Testament says nothing about - - -. You can fill in numerous things, whether Sunday Schools, literature, instrumental music, societies. So? What relevant conclusion can be drawn? To conclude that such and such is therefore sinful is illogical unless one first proves that whatever the New Testament is silent about is sinful. No one will attempt this, for we are all very selective in our arguments from silence.

Fallacies of ambiguity are of a different character, sometimes called fallacies of clearness. These fallacies muddy the water in that the terms used may be understood in different ways, and the writer or speaker shifts the meaning and thus misleads the reader or hearer, even if it is unintentional. These fallacies, while often the ploy of the unscrupulous, are sometimes committed in ignorance. Take, for instance, the proposition that *There is only one church,* one that the Christian world generally accepts, understanding *church* in the catholic or universal sense. But I was reared among folk who mean something far different when they say that, for they apply *church* only to what they call "The Church of Christ," making it the only church. This the logicians call equivocation, a form of ambiguity, in that a term is shifted to mean something different from the usual meaning.

Ambiguity is so deceptive that it is intriguing. One can play games with it and make sport of its nuances. I will lay this one on you as an example. What does this say?

Woman without her man would be lost.

It all depends on how you accent it. To say Woman, *without her man,* would be lost, is far different from Woman, *without her,* man would be lost. My Ouida says the second reading is correct, while I say the first is!

A wartime poster read *Save Soap and Waste Paper* and a more recent one reads *Safe Driving is No Accident.* I was amused at the newspaper account of the robbery of a case of expensive whiskey from a package store, which concluded with "The sheriff is working on the case." The classic example, however, comes out of ancient Greece. Croesus, the king, was to do battle with the Persians, but wanted word from the Oracle of Delphi as to how the battle would go. The oracular reply was "If Croesus went to war with Cyrus, he would destroy a mighty kingdom." Pleased with the prediction, Croesus went to war but was defeated, only later to complain to the Oracle. But the Oracle insisted that the prediction was correct. Croesus did destroy a mighty kingdom - *his own!*

When we keep in mind that words are only signs and mean nothing in themselves, we will be alert to make sure the signs are clear. After all, others will understand us only to the degree that our language is clear and unambiguous. If you see a flag at half mast, you have a fairly clear idea of what it means, but if you see a man out in the field waving a flag, it might mean several things or nothing. Words are symbols of ideas; if we confuse the symbols, we confuse the ideas. We are to honor this vital rule of logic: *a sign is understood only when it is known what it is that some one is using the sign to signify.*

There is the sign "Spirit-filled," which is admittedly a Biblical concept. But what does it mean? If one studies the relevant passages, she will likely conclude that it means the Holy Spirit dwells in or makes his home in the person, *filled* in the sense of being infused, or something like that. Church-wide, universally, it would be understood in some such way, with variations of emphasis. But I hear folk talk about "Spirit-filled" only in reference to speaking in tongues, as if, Filled with the Spirit *equals* Speaking in Tongues, and they never think of being filled with the Spirit except in reference to tongues. This being the case, communication bogs down. The "sign" they use is understood differently. To avoid the fallacy of ambiguity, *equivocation* in this case, they would need to make it clear what they mean by "Spirit-filled," and they should recognize that they are using the term in an unusual way.

This fallacy has laid a heavy hand upon Churches of Christ, often causing us to be seen less than favorably by our neighbors. We say we are not a denomination, when we most certainly are a denomination *in terms of what that word usually denotes.* The world understands that term to refer to a religious body that is separate from others, with its own name, doctrine, organization, publishing houses, colleges, seminaries, etc. How can we have all that *denomination* denotes and not be a denomination? The world must tolerantly conclude that churches are like that, they say and do strange things. It is game-playing, a hide-and-seek ploy in which we deceive no one but ourselves. It is one of those things that we are suppose to say now and again, *We are not a denomination,* but it only reveals how bogged down a people can get in their own ambiguities.

Now if we mean we are not a *sect*, the claim is entirely different, for a sect can be understood to refer to a group that claims to be the church to the exclusion of all others. I would say that we are *at best* presently moving from a sect to a denomination. And I think in that context my signs are clear.

Another of our claims that may commit a fallacy of ambiguity is that we are neither Protestant nor Catholic. No one of course would suppose us to be Catholic, meaning *Roman* Catholic in this context, so the claim is reduced to being non-Protestant. This must be confusing to people who suppose, in the light of history, that all Christian churches fall within the two traditions, Catholic or Protestant. It would be interesting to see how some of our more knowledgeable people would argue that we are non-Protestant. What does 'this mean? Are we to be ahistorical and deny that two thousand years of history have any meaning to our present existence? Our beginnings are traceable to the Protestant reformation whether we are aware of it or not, and we *are* Protestants, however prone we are to equivocate, a heritage for which we should be thankful. Our claim to a kind of vacuum-like existence, separate from all history, that identifies us as the restored New Testament church is as irresponsible as it is when the Mormons make that claim. Even the Mormons are Protestants, in spite of the protestations! There are of course many different kinds of Protestants, even Protestants that deny being Protestants.

I grant that there may be an idealized goal for the church in being neither Roman or Greek Catholic nor Protestant, a call for the church to be the one, holy, apostolic, catholic Body of Christ, transcending all that has developed thus far in history. I am willing to share that dream and work for its reality, but for any denomination to claim to be the fulfillment of that ideal is both irrational and intolerable. We can work toward the ideal much better if we are unambiguous about who we are, what we are, and where we came from. We have the need to get right with history.

A lot of our doctrinal hangups are the fruit of ambiguity. Fuzzy language is due to fuzzy thinking. Take the old bromide "only through the word," which is suppose to identify the function of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Not only is the phrase non-Biblical, but it may be nonsensical as well. *The Spirit operates only through the word.* What is that suppose to mean? If one will allow the scriptures to speak for themselves in reference to what the Spirit does and discard all excess baggage, he will come much nearer to a clear concept of the Spirit's work.

Take Rom. 8:26 as an example: "The Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words." This makes it perfectly clear that the Spirit does something for us: *helps us in our weakness, and prays for us.* It is both irrelevant and ambiguous to talk about

"only through the word" in such a context. It is neither *with* or *without* the word. The Spirit simply does it. Why do we have to muddy the water with our lingo?

All my life in the Church of Christ I have heard this hermeneutical rule: the Bible teaches by way of command, approved example, and necessary inference. I have long been convinced, however, that it is of no value as a rule of interpretation. Moreover, it is misleading and fallacious, being grossly ambiguous. There are commands that do not apply to all times and situations. When is an example "approved," and even so is it universally applicable? "Necessary inference" is ambiguous, suggesting that some inferences are unnecessary. The whole bit is fuzzy. It is better to say that the scriptures teach by communicating facts and ideas, which call for responsible interpretation, such as one would use in interpreting any literature.

This is enough to show that we need to shore up our thinking. The mind *does* matter. "Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding," Ps. 32.9 urges upon us, and Eph. 1:18 tells us that "the eyes of your heart' are to be enlightened, which shows that both heart and mind are to be attuned to God. Sloppy thinking is no more God-like than sloppy living. If there are rules for living, there are rules 'for the direction of the mind, and God is the author of both. If right living is grounded in principles, so is right thinking. If we violate principles of living, we have to pay in terms of ill health, economic hardship, and broken relationships. If we violate principles of reason, we have to pay in terms of shallow, unfounded, prejudiced conclusions, which are destructive to the whole of life.

We are not to play our hunches, which is the lifestyle of a lot of people, even in their "study" of the Bible. They resort to such incantations as random finger-poking, supposing that the Spirit leads in such ways. They study by impulse, skipping from verse to verse, ignoring the context. They reach conclusions by *feeling* their way, supposing that logic, like science, has nothing to do with religion.

Jesus tells us that the prodigal son "came to himself," which means he came to his senses. He began to *think* and to think critically, which led to responsible action: "I will arise and go to my father." He wasn't playing his hunches or relying on his impulses. His *mind* was being renewed and he was getting his thinking straight.

God has given us His word. He intends that we apply our minds to it, vigorously and courageously, as well as searchingly. If we love him with all our mind as well as with our heart, we will do that, recognizing that there are principles for right thinking as well as there are principles for anything else, whether economics, biology, or law. --- *the Editor*

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"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

Not only was Jesus a great storyteller but a story *maker* as well, providing his envoys with rich resources to draw upon for the stories they old. In writing to a nobleman named Theophilus, Luke the physician, "after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning," told *the* Story by recounting numerous stories about Jesus, as well as stories Jesus himself told. And it was Luke more than any other gospel writer who realized the power of storytelling. Only he passes along to us the stories of the prodigal son and he good Samaritan, and it is only in *Luke* that we learn about Zacchaeus, he judge and the widow, the crafty steward, and the publican and the pharisee who went to the temple to pray.

And only Luke tells us that pregnant little story of Jesus healing ten lepers, a story too important for us to have missed. The Lord was on his way to Jerusalem *to die,* which he realized, even if his disciples did not. While passing through Samaria and Galilee he entered an unnamed village. It was here that he met ten lepers, all men, who stood at a distance and cried out, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

The leper was a pitiful creature, not only because of his most dreadful disease, but also because he was an outcast from society. The law required lat he be kept apart and that he keep his mouth covered. He was to keep is hair disorderly and his clothes torn so as to be easily spotted. In the event a healthy person inadvertently wandered his way, the leper was to cry out, *unclean, unclean!,* as Lev. 13:45 stipulated. They usually moved about in small groups, helping each other the best they could. When Moses' own sister Miriam became a leper, at the judgment of God, she too was separated from the others. Aaron begged that she might be healed, for she looked like a monster coming from its mother's womb with flesh half corrupted (Num. 12:11).

It was pitiful souls like Miriam who stood at a distance in a dusty village and pled with the Christ for mercy. While they had enough faith to cry out for pity, Jesus, as he nearly always did, gave them something to do that would demonstrate their faith. He instructed them to present themselves to the priests, a necessary step for their rehabilitation, for only the priests could certify their fitness to join society. It must have blown the minds of those priests when ten well-known lepers showed up *clean.* It may help to explain why Luke later reported that "a large group of priests made their submission to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

The record reveals that one of the lepers, seeing that he was healed, turned back, apparently before reaching the priests. He returned to Jesus to express his gratitude, and he praised God (the Greek word shows it was in a loud voice) every step of the way. It is this urgent, spontaneous, joyous response that is at the heart of real faith. Those who are

inclined to take God for granted have something important to learn from the grateful leper. His heart was so full of praise and thanksgiving that he fell down on his face in the presence of Jesus.

It is at this point that Jesus asked the question that deserves a place in history. *Where are the nine?* Only one of the ten returned to thank God and he was a despised Samaritan. The overall Story that Luke is telling, the *gospel* story, continually assaults Jewish self-righteousness. They were certain that the Samaritans were especially wicked while they were especially good. It is no accident, therefore that the hero of this story as well as that of the good Samaritan are designed to show the Jews that there is a big difference between being righteous and being self-righteous. The nine, probably all Jews, were *literally* obeying Jesus, and were even with the priests getting their certification as *clean* citizens. But Jesus finds their faith lacking, despite their literal obedience. What he wanted to see in all ten of them was what he saw in the heart of the lowly Samaritan. They were obedient, *technically,* but not really committed. What kind of faith is it that expresses no gratitude?

The lowly Samaritan leper was certainly a poor man, which brings to mind the words of Alexander Pope: “When I find a great deal of gratitude in a poor man, I take it for granted there would be as much generosity if he were rich.” It figures, doesn’t it? A grateful heart will be a generous heart. And it works the other way. If generosity is in short supply in our modern world, it is because of a lack of gratitude. The generous mind is always grateful. It realizes that it has a debt it cannot pay.

It is a worthy exercise in self-examination to ask ourselves if we are more like the thankful Samaritan or the unthankful nine. Had I been among the cleansed lepers, would I have turned back to thank God, or would I have hastened on into the busy world taking my blessing for granted? It is a sobering question. Perhaps many of us are like Simon the Pharisee, whom Luke also tells us about in chap. 7, who loved little because he had been forgiven little (as he saw it). If we are not really aware of the grossness of our sins, we have no way of being grateful for what God has done for us through Christ. The despised leper cried for mercy because he was well aware of his miserable condition. He saw in Jesus the wellspring of mercy. He did not ask for justice. In the presence of God who sues for justice? *Have mercy on us!* This must become the cry of our untoward generation and of our uncommitted modern church.

Wretched as it is, leprosy is a fitting symbol of sin. As leprosy corrupts the flesh sin corrupts the soul, and as leprosy drives one from family and society into utter abandonment, sin separates one from God and all that is pure and noble. As leprosy led to physical death sin leads to spiritual death. If we could see the leper-like qualities in our lives like Aaron saw his diseased sister, we too would be more inclined to cry out for

mercy. Satan has deceived us into supposing that sin is not all that bad, after all. We are not likely to have hearts filled with praise, prayer, and thanksgiving until we have minds that realize the monster-like effects of sin.

The renewal of the church in our day calls for grateful hearts, a lesson we can learn from Israel's great poet, in whose psalms every furrow is sown with seeds of thanksgiving. "I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me," David could say, and so he could pray, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise." He came to see what God really wants: "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa. 51). David would have no problem in understanding the point Luke wanted Theophilus to see in the story of the ten lepers. David finally learned that it was not *technical* obedience that God wants, such as sacrifices, but a broken heart. In the same psalm the poet concludes that God *will* accept the burnt offerings, once he has the heart.

Jesus thought it proper for the cleansed leper to praise God and return to express his gratitude in humble prostration, even when he was not doing precisely what he had already told him to do. Indeed, he bestowed upon him something more. "Your faith has made you whole" was more than a diseased-free body. Yet he was still told to *Go*, and we can believe he went to the priests as Jesus had directed.

He may not have lined things up precisely right, but Jesus liked it! --- *the Editor*

GRATITUDE

If gratitude is due from children to their earthly parent, how much more is the gratitude of the great family of men due to our father in heaven. --- *Hosea Ballou*

He that urges gratitude pleads the cause both of God and men, for without it we can neither be sociable nor religious. --- *Seneca*

Let never day nor night unhallow'd pass,

But still remember what the Lord hath done. ---- *Shakespeare*

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IS BAPTISM ESSENTIAL?

In another part of this issue you may read a short piece on the work of the Wycliffe translators. We rejoice over the work they are doing. It would be difficult to name anything more important than giving people the word of God in their own vernacular. The author of the essay, Danny New, along with his devoted wife, are longtime friends of mine. In fact one of their children is named for me, a distinct honor indeed. I not only keep in touch with the News in the Wycliffe program (no play on words intended!) but with Ralph Reed and his wife as well, who often write of their exciting ministry with Wycliffe. A recent letter from Ralph forms the basis of this article.

Ralph, son of a Church of Christ missionary, tells me that the Wycliffe program is not open to anyone who believes that anything more than faith in Christ is essential to salvation. He points out that Church of Christ and Christian Church folk who believe that baptism is essential might be directed to serve with the Pioneer translators. I find this information to be thought provoking, if not alarming. I am not disturbed over the position taken by Wycliffe, but over the impression people have of our doctrine of baptism. Should we hold the view that baptism is essential to salvation? I would like for you to think critically with me on that question for a few paragraphs.

Should a Wycliffe official or anyone else ask any of us in the Church of Christ if we believe that baptism is essential to salvation (going to heaven), I think we should say *no,* or at least *yes* and *no,* depending on where one is. We should say *no* because we speak as the scriptures speak, and the Bible nowhere says that baptism is essential. Or we might say *yes* and *no,* in that even the Wycliffe folk concede that baptism is a command, and if one understands it to be a command for him, then it is essential for him to do it. This happens to be where the scriptures place baptism: it is the answer of a good conscience toward God (I Pet. 3:21). I doubt if the Wycliffe folk would reject anyone for believing *that.*

If we accept as absolute the premise that *baptism is essential to salvation,* then we must conclude that no unbaptized person of accountable age will be in heaven. A Dallas newspaper recently reported the case of a person who was about to be baptized in a river being suddenly carried away by an under current. The preacher was about to immerse him when suddenly he was gone, carried into eternity before he was baptized. At the time of the news item the body had not been recovered.

There is not one person in a thousand among us in Churches of Christ-Christian Churches who believes that such a person will go to hell for not being baptized. This being the case, we do not believe, *absolutely,* that one must be baptized to be saved. The case cited is of course very unusual, but there may be many reasons why a true, penitent believer is not yet immersed. It is a very vulnerable, judgmental religion that consigns

them all to hell. I am convinced that the vast majority in the Church of Christ do not hold such a legalistic position.

Too, if baptism is an absolute must for going to heaven, even the hands of almighty God are tied. One could bar the door of heaven and not even allow the Father to grant entrance to a single unbaptized soul. If it be argued that baptism is an edict of Christ, the apostle Paul recognized that God is not subject to any such limitations: “It is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him” (I Cor. 15:27). God can fill heaven with unbaptized people if he chooses to do so. We therefore must be careful in speaking in absolute terms. *Essential* is a very stubborn, unbending term, and it is our deduction. The scriptures do not use it in reference to baptism. I would be willing to answer any inquirer with: *baptism was essential for me, understanding the ordinance as I did.* But my understanding and obedience cannot be made an absolute for everyone else.

In our efforts to restore an ordinance that we believe others have neglected, we have, I fear, overstated our case, or what we believe to be the Biblical position. If we are dispassionate enough on the subject, we should begin our re-examination with the realization that not only has the church at large disagreed all these centuries on baptism but our own fathers in the Stone-Campbell movement as well. Even when we suppose we have the truth on the subject, it is hardly appropriate to be dogmatic.

If we are the Bible-centered people we claim to be, it should be enough for us to say only what the scriptures actually say on the subject. One of my Wycliffe friends stated in one of his letters that among the translators there is little disagreement on what the scriptures actually say. They disagree on what they think it means by what it says. Perhaps that is our answer. We do not have to say all that much about what we think it means, but what it says.

The Bible says several exciting things about baptism, such as it being for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), that we are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27), and that we are buried with Christ in baptism (Col. 2:12). Since the Wycliffe translators agree with us that the Bible *says* these things, we should all be willing to forget what we think it means by what it says.

If we all believe what the Bible *says*, we will believe that in some sense or in some way the believer is buried with Christ in baptism and that it is for the remission of sins. If one will not go this far, then he does not believe what the Bible says, apart from what one may believe it means by what it says.

But I like the way the Wycliffe folk stated their objection: they do not want people who believe that anything more than faith in Christ is essential to salvation. In the light of scripture who can deny such a proposition? *Of course* it is by faith and only by faith, and it is in this context that Paul places baptism, which is "through faith in the working of God" (Col. 2:12). And the apostle assures us that salvation is only by God's mercy, apart from *any* work of righteousness which we do ourselves. It is here that he describes baptism as "the washing of regeneration," and not regeneration itself (Tit. 3:5).

We seriously err if we make baptism more than a faithful response to the grace of God, which is the only source of our salvation. We must not leave the impression that one *procures* salvation by being baptized. Baptism is that ordinance of God, by which, when obeyed, one can know he has received the remission of sins and been united with Christ. The act itself does not *gain* remission, for only God's imputed grace through faith does that, nor is there any power in the water as such. But the ordinance of baptism stands as a sign on a highway, confirming that we have left the state of sin and entered the state of grace. We can therefore *know* that we are saved, for it is confirmed in baptism.

Finally, our Wycliffe friends and all others who suppose, perhaps correctly, that the Church of Christ overstates the case for baptism are to remember that such a concern should work both ways. Maybe they *understate* the role of baptism. Since the Wycliffe people gloriously translate all these scriptures on baptism into thousands of languages, I suggest that their position on baptism be strictly a scriptural one, apart from any theological deductions. Let these passages on baptism simply be read to the people in their vernacular, without comment, and let the people decide for themselves. And let their recruits, whether from the Church of Christ or wherever, agree simply to read what the Bible says about baptism. Surely no one in this entire translation organization will offer any objection to their workers reading their own translations about baptism to those they teach.

And if those of us in Churches of Christ believe what we preach, that it is the word of God that we want for the people, then no explanations are needed on our part. After all, there is nothing sacrosanct about our interpretations. We have yet to demonstrate that we really believe that the Bible itself is sufficient. We are usually very eager to see to it that our interpretation is part of the package, and we feel more secure if we send one of our missionaries along with the Bible to make sure the people understand it the way we do! --- *the Editor*

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CAMPBELL ON BAPTISM

I have from the first day in which I preached baptism for remission of sins, taught that, without previous faith and repentance, baptism availed nothing --- that a man was virtually, or in heart, in the new covenant, and entitled to its blessings, when he believed and repented; but not formally nor in fact justified or forgiven till he put on Christ in baptism; that if by any insuperable or involuntary difficulty he could not be baptized, and were in the mean time to die, he would be *in heart* right with God, and would be accepted through the Beloved, although on earth he had not the testimony of God nor the testimony of man that he was forgiven and accepted through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. . . That some of my brethren, with too much ardor, have given to baptism an undue eminence, a sort of pardon-procuring, rather than a pardon-certifying and enjoying efficacy, I frankly admit; but such has never been my reasonings nor my course. - *Mill. Harb.,* 1840, 544f.

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Pilgrimage of Joy. . . No. 49

WAGING PEACE

W Carl Ketcherside

One of the greatest blessings which has come to me has been the privilege of working with the Canadian brethren. Their great hospitality, developed in part from a frontier existence not too many decades ago, is proverbial. I have been with them from the Maritime Provinces on the east to beautiful Victoria in the far west. It was because of this I looked forward with keen interest to speaking at the Prairie Young Peoples Association Conference, held in Yellowgrass, Saskatchewan, April 15-17, 1971.

The congregation at Yellowgrass is unique. Never very large, it has sent out more preachers than any place else I have known. Most of these were educated in the states, and most of them remained in “The lower forty-eight” as these United States are called. I had met many of them and knew a great many other brethren from Yellowgrass before I arrived. Without exception they were all sincere and sacrificing for the Cause of Christ. The conference was excellent. It made possible for the bonds of fellowship to be tightened from Winnipeg to Dawson Creek. It lapped over into the northern tier of states and drew people from all of them.

On Sunday night, after the conference had concluded in the afternoon, brethren had made arrangements for me to speak in Regina, the beautiful capital of the province. The meeting was held in the Christian Church building. The brethren were in a turmoil. There was a division of sentiment as to which direction they should go on “restructure” which was the talk of the Americans in those days. We were favored by having with us four members of the Anglican clergy. They heard me declare the good news as our only hope. I pointed out that, in the final analysis, all fellowship with God was on a personal basis. It was man-to-God. Regardless of what happened to institutions it could not sever the relationship unless we consented to having it do so.

On April 26-30 I was scheduled for a fellowship rally at Phoenix, Arizona. It continued for five nights in the North High School Auditorium: By selecting a “neutral place” it was believed that more people could attend without offending their tender consciences. I was interviewed on radio twice and appeared on television in talk shows twice. In one of these people could call in and ask questions directly. It was interesting to note that while we were engaged in the great and vital issues affecting the whole world of believers, and unbelievers, that questions from members of the Church of Christ all had to do with instrumental music. The fact that we were divided and rent asunder in direct contravention to the prayer of Jesus seemed of no particular consequence. The sordid problem of division had to be aired. The question was no longer “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?” It was now “What think ye of a piano?”

I went next to Columbus, Ohio for the Central Ohio Minister’s Fellowship, May 12-24. My theme for the series of talks was “Growing Up in Our Understanding of Christian Unity.” I gathered that almost all of the men agreed with me theoretically, but lacked a knowledge of how to implement what I was saying practically. Without realizing it was happening, we had been betrayed by circumstances into becoming a non-sectarian sect. We were in partisan competition with other sects about us. We thought we were right and could not be wrong. They thought the same thing of themselves. We looked upon one who was converted to us as being a convert to Christ. It was obvious that we were in some cases developing a “personality cult” built around the charisma of a preacher. It would take a long time until we truly grew up in our concept of the unity for which Jesus had petitioned.

Our problem was augmented by fear. We had become afraid to venture beyond our traditions. We were frightened at the thought of experimentation, so no new discoveries of how to work were being made. Like a cow tethered to a stake we grazed in our own restricted circles. The length of the rope determined the area we would cover. Yet, all around us was a world dying for what we could share. Meanwhile we were meeting only with those who agreed with us, and rearranging our prejudices. The only bright spot in an

otherwise discouraging picture was that created by a few hearty souls who ignored the brands of men and sought to relate meaningfully to the cross of our Lord.

I stayed with Jeff and Linda Smith. They were some of my favorite people. They had been in Great Britain and we had mutual acquaintances there. It was wonderful to be in their home. Jeff was a student at the university and I got to visit it. It was a great buzzing beehive of activity. On May 24, I went to James River Chapel, south of Springfield, Missouri, where I was among friends I had known since my boyhood days. I held my first meeting in the area when I was fifteen and had returned often. For five nights I spoke on the theme, “Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?” I showed how we had constructed our own images of Jesus which were not real. at all. We had caricatured him only to satisfy our own longings and ideas, but behind the masks we had created stood the real Jesus, still longing to help us.

June 7-11 I began at Highland Church in Louisville. Ernest Lyon ministered to it. It had known some of the great men of the past. Among them was E. L. Jorgenson, who had come from a Scandinavian settlement in Nebraska to become one of the great song compilers of his era. With his goal, the upgrading of the vocal music of the congregations, he was led to bring out “Great Song of the Church.” It caught on. He had hit upon the idea of alphabetizing the hymns in several categories. It was a privilege to be in his home and to share experiences with him. He had ministered in Toronto, and had been instrumental in introducing Claude Witty and James DeForest Murch.

These two men began a series of “unity meetings” in 1936. They had agreed that “tradition, creedalism, provincialism, institutionalism, Pharisaism, extremism, indifference, self-sufficiency, ignorance, proselyting, distrust, and all the imps of Satan were running riot. The leadership of the churches were not calling for unity. There was no great uprising of the rank and file demanding it. Yet we, as a people, had preached it; we ought to practice it.”

Men from both sides risked their futures and engaged in irenic discussion. I opposed it with characteristic ignorance. We were the loyal church and that was it. Finally, the radical element from both sides shot down the meetings. Foy E. Wallace had bitterly opposed them in the south. They came to nought because the brethren were thinking war instead of peace. It was war against brethren and it was much more appealing than war against Satan.

In early July I attended and spoke at the conference on unity at Atlanta Christian College, in Atlanta, Georgia. It was well attended but I came away feeling that more groundwork was needed. The questions showed a strange lack of relevance to the unity of all believers. That passion ‘for oneness had not yet been fanned into flame. Each party was

interested in unity which came its way. There was too much of the spirit of the snake and frog which promotes togetherness by the first swallowing the latter. Several years of teaching would have to be done before each was willing to move toward a common center and let Jesus become the real focal point.

August 2-6 I was back in Oregon at Camp Wi-Ne-Ma for a family camp. It is located in a beautiful spot where hills and mountains drop down to meet the ocean. From my window I could watch huge whales sporting offshore. More than a thousand people were registered. Campers covered the entire area. I was Bible lecturer for the week. In addition, I met with the young people each afternoon. The winds and waves had hollowed out a natural bowl of sand on the shore and we used it for our discussions. All other adults were barred and I could listen freely to the problems and hangups of more than two dozen teenagers. I was, as usual, deeply impressed with their enthusiasm and potential.

Next I went to the Blue Ridge Men's Clinic, which was held not too far from Grandfather Mountain. This spot is known for its gathering of the clans every year. Dressed in tartans and colorful plaids, thousands of people of Scottish ancestry assemble for a reunion. The sound of the pipes reverberates through wild mountain glens. Scottish dances and games are carried on apace to the exultant cries and cheers from thousands of voices. I know some who have not missed attendance there in years, going back repeatedly to eat haggis and to down Scotch oatcakes.

The clinic featured Beaufort Bryant, Clarence Greenleaf and myself, together with 754 other men. It was no place to go to catch up on your sleep. Some men talked virtually through the entire night, huddled' around little campfires, and fortified inwardly by coffee which would dissolve shingle nails. They had often stayed up like this while fox-hunting and it was no problem for them.

I went next to Houston, Texas, one of the fastest growing urban areas in our country. What a contrast it was to the peaceful quiet of the mountain regions of the east, where one could hear the far-off crow of a rooster as he awakened in the morning. Once again, at Sidney Lanier Junior High School I conducted a Fellowship Forum for three nights. It was necessary to define fellowship again for those who had been betrayed into thinking it was something man had the power to extend or withdraw, when in reality, it was a state in which we were simply called to share. To accept one another freely was the greatest blessing to which we had been called.

I have often read a piece of reportorial writing with deep appreciation. I know that a reporter must be selective. He must be judgmental. This means that what is not said may be even more important to another than what is covered. I feel the same tensions in writing this. There was my meeting at Astoria, Illinois, and Canton, Ohio, and the Louisiana State

Convention at Shreveport. Everyone of these was important. At Canton I spoke 12 times in five days and addressed three breakfast meetings. Yet space will not permit full coverage of them.

On October 20 I was back at San Jose, California, to deliver the Roy B. Shaw Memorial Lectures. These were, by terms of the will, to be about the restoration movement. My themes were: The Death of A Dream; The Recovery of Reason; and A Faith For the Future. I demonstrated that our restoration movement arose at a certain period in history. It was spontaneous and not planned. It was adapted to the cultural needs of man as he then existed on the frontier. We no longer live in those times. We must launch a new movement dedicated to renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. We must make the ageless gospel meet the needs of the Space Age.

Later I went to the Genessee Church of Christ, near Flint, Michigan, where it was my privilege to stay with Frank Rester and his good family. Then I found myself at Eldon, Missouri where Seth Wison, Gareth Reece, Russell Boatman and myself engaged in a two-day forum on “The Holy Spirit.” I closed my travels for the year at Windsor, Illinois. It was close to Sand Creek, where the division all began. It was there that for the first time the opinions of men were made tests of fellowship, and those who did not conform were told that they no longer would be regarded as brethren. It seemed like a good place to go back to and proclaim the gospel of peace and seek to undo some of the tragic ills which had resulted from an ill-conceived policy.

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REFLECTIONS

Robert Meyers

A highly vocal majority in the churches of my boyhood argued that ministers should stick to “preaching the gospel” and leave social and economic problems alone, that Christ meant for us to have the poor around or he would not have said: “The poor you have with you always.” To eradicate poverty, they claimed, would be to make Christ a false prophet.

In light of so much else in the Bible, others of us interpret Christ’s comment as a rueful lament, rather than as a prophecy of what must be, or a reflection of what he wanted. It is cruel to interpret this remark in such a way that Christ is made to seem calloused to the fate of the poor.

The fifth chapter of *James* has a blazing indictment of social injustice. Men are excoriated who defraud others of their proper wages, and who cheat and connive in order to live in the lap of luxury. When Upton Sinclair read this once to a group of Biblically illiterate ministers he attributed it to Emma Goldman, an anarchist agitator. The ministers are said to have reacted with indignation against the sentences and to have declared that she ought to be deported.

They might have known better. Long before James, Amos said the same thing: "Therefore because you trample upon the weak, and take from him exactions of grain, though you have built houses of hewn stone, you shall not dwell in them." One may read Micah 6:10-11, Isa. 3:13-15, Jer. 5:26, Luke 16:19-31 or Luke 20:46-47 for support of the idea that social concern is central to Christian witness.

Early preachers bore blunt testimony to social issues and the demands they make. Clement of Alexandria wrote: "I know that God has given us the use of goods, but only as far as it is necessary . . . . It is absurd and disgraceful for one to live magnificently and luxuriously when so many are hungry."

The supreme irony is that many who cry out against what they call the "social gospel" feel it is a sure stepping-stone to Communism. Yet in their calloused neglect of the poor they. play right into the hands of their enemy. As Lenin wrote in 1905, "Religion teaches those who toil in poverty all their lives to be resigned and patient in this world, and consoles them with the hope of reward in heaven. As for those who live upon the labor of others, religion teaches them to be 'charitable' - thus providing a justification for exploitation and, as it were, also a cheap ticket to heaven. . . ."

As if to prove him right, a minister writes from California: "We must be interested only in saving men from SIN - we have no concern with their material affairs." He says that ministers who sermonize about unfair employment and housing practices, greed, and discrimination are "pinkos" or Communist dupes."

It strikes me that he and his kind must be the joy and delight of true Communists, since they can be used to prove the thesis Communists have promoted for years: that no one cares a thing about the poor and exploited except other poor and exploited, and that they must all band together --- under Communism --- to do something for themselves.

Fortunately, not all Christians have decided that daily bread is a trifle. Every week, in some far flung corner of the Kingdom, one discovers men and women doing battle against exploitation, and sealing, in some cases, their concern with their very blood. One

remembers that the great Agreement was ratified with blood in the beginning; perhaps to keep men aware of its value, it must always be --- over and over.

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OF EVERY TONGUE AND TRIBE

Danny New

A Cakchiquel Indian once asked Cameron Townsend: If your God is so great, why doesn't He speak my language?" That was 63 years ago, and it marked the beginning of a revolution, not only in the Cakchiquel culture, but in the world of Christian missions.

Mr. Townsend then began to translate the New Testament into Cakchiquel --- a language that had been spoken for centuries, yet never written. As he worked, he learned of other language groups that would never receive the Word of God in their own language, unless someone went to them. After finishing the Cakchiquel New Testament, he founded Wycliffe Bible Translators in 1939.

Today Wycliffe works in 38 countries, in over 700 language groups. Over 4,000 linguists and support workers are carrying out this task. And over 3,000 more language groups still wait for God's Word!

Can you imagine where the Church would be today if all we knew of God came from Greek or Latin, without a single word of scripture available in English? To depend upon someone else to interpret God's Word for us is to make the "universal priesthood of the believer" practically impossible.

Wycliffe is a non-denominational mission whose emphasis is very specialized. To be a translator requires three semesters of linguistics, then jungle camp training, and a willingness to invest ten to fifteen years in giving God's Word to a people who may reject it all. Yet it is the strong belief that the Spirit of God will deal directly with those who dare to read His Word, that drives these unique missionaries. It's not for everyone! But it has appealed to Christians from some very diverse backgrounds, and the Church of Christ is represented among them.

Terry Casey was a television reporter in Georgia, and is now working in the area of filming and documenting Wycliffe's work. He and Pam just returned from the Philippines where they worked for a year recording some very exciting victories. As the Word of God is given to a language group, the response is often dramatic. This has been a non-traditional missionary role, but a very important and fulfilling one for Terry and Pam.

Ralph and Judy Reed have had plans to begin translating the New Testament into an Aztec language in Mexico for over a year. They are now waiting on visas and Ralph is teaching grammar and morphology at the International Linguistic Center in Dallas, Texas. (Ralph's father is known to many readers of Restoration Review - J. C. Reed is a pioneer missionary in Guatemala.)

Many governments today are not interested in having missionaries in their countries. But in most countries where it works, Wycliffe has a contract with the government to serve --- primarily through linguistic research and literacy. A part of the agreement is that the Bible will be translated into the languages being studied.

One of the unique aspects of this effort is that Christians with denominational and doctrinal differences can work together toward a common and Biblical goal. The Reeds and the Caseys see themselves on the cutting edge of fulfilling the Great Commission. This is best illustrated by an old Indian in Guatemala who once asked a Wycliffe translator, "Did your father know about this Jesus?" The translator proudly answered that he did. Then the old man asked, "Did his father know about this Jesus?" Another yes. "Then Senor, please tell me: why has it taken so long for someone to come tell us?"

Like the Believers of the first century, more and more of us are allowing God Himself define the borders of His Kingdom, and are contenting ourselves with the specific ministries to which we have been assigned.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

George Vins, the Russian Baptist minister exiled to this country, is telling audiences that the church in the Soviet Union is alive and well, that it is vigorous amidst persecution. He rejoices that East and West meet in Christ. Imprisoned time and again for preaching Christ, he was last year deprived of his Russian citizenship and exiled to the United States. He presently heads an organization that reminds the world-wide church of the persecuted believers in Russia.

A group of concerned Presbyterians known as Presbyterians United for Biblical Concerns states that its church should go on record as affirming the value and dignity of every human life, including the unborn child. It rejects the blanket endorsement of abortion for convenience or as a means of birth control.

David Pieratt, a Church of Christ minister, visited the Scrabble Creek Church of all Nations near Smithers, West Virginia, a church that drinks poison and handles snakes as part of its public worship, there being no law against such in that state. When the floor was opened to anyone who wanted to give a testimony, David spoke at length from his New Testament, challenging the peculiar practices of the church. While he says some gnashed at him even while he spoke, there were some that seemed to be impressed. Those who gnashed at him were people, we are to understand, not snakes. Snakes are known generally to behave rather nobly except when molested by a predatory, such as man.

There is a new "walk-out" congregation in San Francisco with the name of San Francisco Church of Christ. They were a part of the Lake Merced Church of Christ. Their mail out says they will "continue in the rich and glorious heritage and traditions of the Church of Christ and its dedication to the principles of the restoration and reformation of New Testament Christianity." Those who left say it was because of an impending inquisition of some who choose to be free in Christ. If you desire to contact the group, write Charles E. Gillen, 428 13th St., Oakland, CA 94612.

Dan McCaghren, pulpit minister for Southern Hills Church of Christ in Tulsa, tells in that church's weekly publication of praying for a radio preacher that he would usually consider "the enemy." The prayer was: "Father, bless this man as he proclaims truth and forgive him when his message goes awry," which is the same prayer he prays for himself. He then says: "Confession time! Intellectually I know God is not limited to my own theological ballpark. Yet emotionally, I still struggled with anyone or anything not labeled 'church of Christ.' While 'back to the Bible' is my banner, I am trying to retire from the bench and turn in my gavel. It is no small matter for one proficient in handing down indictments to 'pray for the enemy.'" Our Tulsa brother is speaking for many of our people.

Intercessors for America is an organization calling upon believers to pray for America. They have periodic days for prayer and fasting so as to combat the "flood-tide of evil that is touching the smallest to the largest nations." Intercessors from 21 nations recently gathered in England to pray for the nations of the world. India's 700 million has less than 3% Christians, but Christianity is the fastest growing religion. The government is leaning toward Russia and Communism. Intercessors are praying together for freedom of religion in India and unity among Christians. If you are interested, write for their newsletter: Box D, Elyria, Oh. 44036.

The editor of this journal will be in Seoul, Korea during Thanksgiving week conducting a retreat for a Church of Christ.

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READER'S EXCHANGE

Your article on leaving the Church of Christ interested me, for several years ago when I considered leaving a preacher of the non-Sunday School persuasion cautioned me about leaving my heritage, that God had placed me where he wanted me. When I explained that my Church of Christ heritage was the Sunday School variety, he was hard pressed to continue his argument. While insisting that I should not betray my heritage, he did not want me to return to my original group! My heritage is the Lord Jesus Christ in whom I am planted, and to betray that heritage is to turn my back on Him. To tie myself to a man-made institution is a foreign to my thinking as leaving the Church of Christ is to its various party adherents. - *Wendell Huddleston, 4613 35th, Lubbock 79414.*

The hinge of the issue of exclusivism is whether we have brothers and sisters within the scope of the denominations. Of course Alexander Campbell believed that we do, but he would be a heretic among us today. This is what put the first serious crack in the Church of Christ theology to which I faithfully adhered. It takes a Samson to shake the foundations. If there are indeed other Christians out there, then there are a lot of things we need to rethink, most of all our attitudes. - *Daniel D. New, 730 Mercury Dr., Duncanville, TX 76137.*

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BOOK NOTES

Be Brief About It by Robert D. Young is a book you should buy for your preacher in that it tells the minister how to preach an effective sermon in as little as 10 minutes! Not only is it a plea for shorter sermons, but it contends that short sermons are more effective and that one actually gets more said, not less. Along the way it is packed with lots of vital information about life and preaching. 7.95 postpaid.

A father upon learning his son was “coming out” as gay, threatened him. A minister said to the son: “You realize, don’t you, why your father is so angry with you. *You killed his son!” Parents of the Homosexual* by David and Shirley Oates, a couple that counsels with both gays and their parents, is a no-nonsense treatment of a problem the church is

slow in facing. The chapter on "We've Lost Our Child" will both sober and educate you. Whether or not your life is directly touched, you will be better informed by reading this one. 6.50 postpaid.

Coping With Difficult People deserves mentioning a second time. It gives priceless descriptions of the doormat, the egg smasher, the crisis creator, the emotional cripple, the short fuse, the sneakin' deacon, the white tornado. Understanding why people are the way they are is a big step toward dealing with them. You may yourself become less difficult! 6.50 postpaid.

New Directions in New Testament Study by Patrick Henry brings you up to date on what is going on in New Testament studies. Dealing as it does with the various approaches to problems of interpretation, it challenges the reader to take a fresh look at many questions. It deals, for instance, with the question of unity and diversity in the NT. Soft cover is only 9.95 postpaid.

We are especially impressed with the writings of John R. W. Stott and recommend his titles highly. We can send you *Baptism and Fullness,* which deals with work of Spirit today (2.75); *Basic Christianity* (1.95); *What Christ Thinks of the Church,* based on letters to seven churches (2.50); *Christ the Controversialist,* which deals with Jesus' confrontation with Jewish leaders and tradition (4.50); *Guard the Gospel,* a heart-warming study of 2 Timothy (3.50).

There are several scholarly but readable studies on various subjects that we suggest: *Baptism in the New Testament* by Oscar Cullmann (4.50); *The Last Things* by George Eldon Ladd, on the millennium and questions on end-time (3.50); *The Lord's Supper* by Martin E. Marty (2.75).

We have a new supply of *The Fool of God,* a novel on life of Alexander Campbell. 5.50 postpaid.

Johnson's *New Testament Notes* is available in one volume for only 10.00, and we can supply the best Bible dictionary of all, *New Westminister Dictionary of the Bible,* for 14.95.

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